



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Aged Care**

Ms Pothida Youhorn  
Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Youhorn

I am writing in relation to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee, Budget Estimates 2022-23 Health Portfolio hearing on 1 June 2023.

I wish to correct evidence provided to the Committee during its examination of the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) (pages 91 – 92 of the Proof Hansard refer).

In answering a question from Senator Waters, I said:

“As you know, that \$48.7 million over four years has been attributed from the budget for these pilots. Six of them were already underway. They were in Brisbane south; Hunter New England and Central Coast; central and eastern Sydney; Nepean Blue Mountains; north-western Melbourne; and western Victoria. Funding was also given to extend those pilots, so those sites have been given further funding. And then we're also including an additional eight PHNs to receive grant funding so that there are sites in all Australian states and territories. Those sites are yet to be announced, but they will cover every state and territory, and they've also been expanded to include a sexual violence and child abuse module in three of the already participating pilot areas, which are Brisbane south, Hunter New England, which is central-eastern Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains, and western Victoria.”

Upon reviewing the Hansard I realised I provided information to Senator Waters in relation to the *Supporting the primary care response to family, domestic and sexual violence Primary Health Network (PHN) Pilot* whereas Senator Waters had sought advice on the *Supporting Recovery Pilot* through PHNs aimed at supporting victim-survivors with trauma-informed mental health supports.

Both pilots support victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence, however they are two distinct pilots by the Department through PHNs. My response to Senator Waters on pages 91-92 of the Hansard provided information on the *Supporting the primary care response to family, domestic and sexual violence PHN Pilot* (FDSV pilot) and not the *Supporting Recovery Pilot*.

In my response I stated “And then we're also including an additional eight PHNs to receive grant funding so that there are sites in all Australian states and territories.” I would like to correct this response to note that eight PHNs in total will receive grant funding so that there are sites in all Australian states and territories, not “an additional eight”. Five additional PHNs sites will receive grant funding to establish a pilot for family, domestic and sexual violence including child sexual abuse and three of the existing family and domestic violence

pilots will receive funding to expand their family and domestic violence pilot to include sexual violence as per my statement.

The Department's answers to Senator Waters' questions on the *Supporting Recovery* pilot program are below:

1. Have pilot locations been identified for the *Supporting Recovery* PHN Pilot? How were they selected?
2. How do these programs work with existing sexual, domestic or family violence services?
3. Will sexual violence experts be involved in the roll out and evaluation of the pilot?
4. Is there any additional funding for services that the PHNs will refer to?

On 17 March 2023, the Department wrote to all PHN Chief Executive Officers inviting PHNs to provide an expression of interest to roll out a pilot site in their region. Each submission was assessed by the Department and given a weighting based on an assessment criterion.

On 4 May 2023, the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP, endorsed the six successful PHN pilot locations. Successful PHNs are:

- Gippsland PHN
- Hunter New England and Central Coast PHN
- South Western Sydney PHN
- Brisbane South PHN
- Northern Territory PHN
- Country Western Australia PHN

The *Supporting Recovery* pilot program will work with existing services by embedding its core services within an existing local service to promote integration. Successful PHNs will commission core services and decide on an appropriate host service in their region. This host service will vary across each PHN depending on availability and local variability. Host services have not yet been commissioned by PHNs.

On 12 December 2022, the Department established the Mental Health and Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Expert Reference Group (ERG) to inform the *Supporting Recovery* pilot. Membership includes expertise spanning the family, domestic and sexual violence sectors, including victim-survivors with a lived experience. The ERG was initially established for the period 12 December 2022 to 30 June 2023. The Department is now progressing a formal extension of the ERG from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. A representative of the National Women's Safety Alliance and National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence is a member of the ERG. On 4 July 2023, the Acting Chair of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence was also offered, and accepted, an appointment on the ERG.

The ERG was originally established to inform development of the Model of Care for the pilot. Going forward, the ERG will be updated on the rollout and implementation of the *Supporting Recovery* pilot program and inform an independent evaluation for the pilot program.

A significant portion of the funding for the pilot is to support the commissioning of appropriate, longer term, trauma-informed mental health services for victim-survivors. PHNs will commission these services locally, based on the model being developed in each location and local need. PHNs will make the decision on which services will receive this funding, for example, boosting funding to existing providers or commissioning new services to meet gaps in the local area.

Kind regards

Tiali Goodchild  
Assistant Secretary  
Health Equity Branch  
Population Health Division  
14 July 2023